

I am a musician, a recording artist, a concerned citizen and mediaconsumer.

I have written several hundred songs and have recently released my first album. I play daily and also co-host my city's premier open mic event (as decided by the readers of our City Magazine) each week. I perform in front of hundreds of people every week.

There are no "local" radio stations, as they are all owned by major corporations who pre-program their content. There are a few privately-owned stations in nearby cities that play some of my recordings. I do not feel that the broadcast industry in my city (Roanoke, Va.) is serving the community by repeatedly airing the same music every day, almost on a timed basis. The industry falls short of satisfying the desires of its end users.

If the broadcast industry continues to operate in a monopoly environment, then the FCC should invoke minimum standards to regulate it.

In my opinion, "local programming" should involve input from the community, and the community should be made aware of the options available. By definition, programming decisions that are not made at a local level do not constitute "local programming".

Radio stations are a business and, as such, should be able to decide what to offer their listeners, just as a retailer should be able to decide what products to offer their customers. Local programming should include any programming that is decided upon on a local level.

Community events and activities are not programming. They are advertising. Period. Participation in such events should not count towards compliance with local programming requirements.

Existing rules regarding payola are deficient in addressing current practices of station owners and record labels. Study the money flow. It is widely known in the music business that, for every song heard on the radio, there are at least 1,000 better ones that will never be heard. I don't know what to do about that, but I believe that it is caused by modern-day payola.

Deceptive voicetracking should be illegal and incur severe punishment. If a station chooses to use voicetracking as a tool to limit overhead, it should be allowed. Market pressures will force the right direction for each station.

National playlists do not serve the public well, either. They severely limit the choices of the listeners and tend to create an isolated "neverland" unavailable to the many artists that create the thousands of better songs never heard on the radio. Localism will evolve out of fairness in the industry. If that fairness has to be regulated, then so be it.

I believe that LPFM stations are the future of local programming. If the actions of the FCC are not purchased by the majors, thwarting LPFM licenses, LPFM stations will cause the major stations to be genuinely more involved on a local level.

My thanks go out to the people involved with making these issues public in order to solve the related problems.

